1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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843 (585) (586) ance, divorce can only be obtained through the decree of the panchāyat (tribal council). Moreover, if it has not been performed, a man cannot claim the paternity of the child. The ceremony is called kanni kattodu or kanni hākodu (thread tying or throwing). The husband and wife are seated in the midst of those who have assembled for the occasion, and the former asks his father-in-law whether he may throw the thread round his wife's neck, and, having received permission, proceeds to do so. If he gets the thread, which must have no knots in it, entangled in the woman's bunch of hair (kondai), which is made large for the occasion by the addition of false (783) hair, he is fined three rupees. On the day of the ceremony, the man and his wife are supposed to be under pollution, and sit in the verandah to receive presents. The mats used by them for sleeping on are cleaned on the following morning, and they get rid of the pollution by bathing.

843 • 846 783 821 A first confinement must not take place within the house, and the verandah is converted into a lying-in chamber, from which the woman is, after delivery, removed to the outer apartment, where she remains till she is free from pollution by catching sight of the crescent moon. If a woman has been delivered at her

846 (777) father's house, she returns to the home of her husband within a month of the birth of the child on an auspicious

851 day. On arrival there, the infant is placed near the feet of an old man standing by a lamp within the milk-house. Placing his right hand over the head of the infant, the old man blesses it, and a feast is held, before the commencement of which two cups, one containing milk, and the other cooked rice, are produced. All the relations take up a little of the milk and rice, and touch the tongue of the baby with them.

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844 (853) generally those who have had several births themselves. Most women in a village want to go and watch a delivery; but it is said to be a sin for any woman watching to leave before the delivery is completed. This is recalled in the saying, "Delivery is like having escaped death," which means that the pain borne by a woman is nearly as much as at death. In the same way, one should never pass a woman in advanced pregnancy, in case she is in labour and (843) needs help. If too many come to the delivery one old woman selects who should stay to help and asks the rest to leave. Those who remain give encouragement to the expectant mother by saying, "Be brave, there won't be any pain." Badagas expect the woman not to cry out; but she will if the pain is too much. "The man who has seen a tiger hunt is scared like a woman just before delivery," runs the proverb, probably in reference to a woman's first delivery.

Usually some eight or ten women attend at a birth, although no more than one of them is likely to be recognized as the midwife. Though it is not compulsory for them to be present they nevertheless come, mainly out of genuine concern for the girl's predicament but also partly because they expect their friends to render similar service when necessary for themselves or their daughters. It is clear 844 that enmity among Badaga families does not particularly concern 578 the women, because even if a family is not on speaking terms with that of the pregnant girl, a woman from the "enemy" family will still attend at the birth; or if that is not possible will come to her father's house afterwards to enquire after her—as indeed would a male of this "enemy" household. Such an "enemy" neighbour woman will not eat food provided by the girl's father while she attends at the birth, but she may well accept food provided by the girl's husband and take it home to eat. The thinking behind (858) this pattern of behaviour is that the girl—at least when she was an unmarried child living in her father's house—was common to the whole village. Badaga children are always viewed in this light, rather than as exclusively members of particular families.

844 Male relatives of the woman wait outside on the veranda or the street, and if there are difficulties they will offer advice or fetch other women to help. Generally the husband of the woman is amongst these men. There is nothing in particular that he should (846) be doing; and Badagas have never practised the *couvade*. It is her husband who must meet all expenses associated with the birth, even though it occurs in the home of the woman's father. Clarified

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844 [845] a midwife who knows this skill shakes the woman's legs until the baby comes into the right position.

Post-partum Practices

4.10. Before the cutting of the umbilicus, the baby is laid on the floor on sacking or cloth. The cord is tied with a piece of string (in old days, a thread lampwick), some 8 cm. from the belly. This string is to curtail bleeding. Then the umbilical cord is cut with a penknife or razor blade. In earlier days, significantly, it was only to be cut with a knife made by the Kotas and otherwise used in reaping.

Immediately a couple of handfuls of cold water are poured on the infant's shoulders or dabbed on with a cloth. In particular the left shoulder of a boy is wetted, or the crown of the head if it is a girl. This act is intended to make the child strong for carrying things, on the shoulder and head respectively. It is then bathed in very hot water.

In earlier days the next step was to cover the baby with oil pressed from the seeds of the castor-oil bush. Now ground-nut oil is put all over the body instead. The mother also takes a bath in very hot water—hotter than a normal bath. After this she sits down and is given a tumbler of cold water to drink. This is to make any shivering subside and to give her peace of mind. Some [273] women now take a sip of brandy, a practice dating back a century or so. If a woman's family are too poor to afford a nip of brandy, [276] a little opium is perhaps given instead, or else very poor people might simply crush a dried poppy head and give it to the mother in a glass of tea or coffee. Typically a poor mother will get one dose of opium just after the delivery, and then another on the [276] following two days. The problem with using opium as a medicine is that, whether it is taken after childbirth or simply to cure a cold, it may become addictive. The new mother is also given a little palm jaggery (a kind of crude sugar that keeps for years). Next they give her three or four cloves of garlic to eat, while one piece is put into each of her ears.

844 4.11. After both mother and baby have been bathed, the child is brought back to her. The mother sits, holding the baby, with its face 846 on her right side and at the right breast. Before taking its first suck, it is given a drop of ground-nut oil to drink. Then a lime is cut in

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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half, and on each cut surface someone puts fresh cowdung, a blade of Bermuda grass, and some clarified butter. Then an old, experienced woman takes the first half of the lime and runs itdo wn the right side of the baby, not quite touching the body. As she does this she says: "This child belongs to both the father and the mother;" but she does not name the parents. This assertion of joint parentage is the whole point of the ritual. Then the half lime is sucked by the mother, touched to her child's mouth, and thrown away. In the same manner the other half of the lime is then run down the left side of the baby, the same pronouncement made, and the mother sucks the lime, touches it to the baby's mouth, and throws it away too. The lime is perhaps intended to ward off evil spirits. If at an unexpected birth no lime is available, the ritual is either done using the leaf of a lime tree, or failing that it is done with the cowdung, grass and clarified butter alone. After this the baby is fed, first from the right breast, then from the left.

Bezoar is a "heat-giving" substance from the stomach of a cow, supposedly the one which leads the herd. A small quantity of it—about as much as a coriander seed—is covered with mother's milk and given to a male infant just after he has drunk milk for the first time. Should there be none available then, the bezoar can also be fed to him on the third, fifth or seventh day of life, and that day must be a Friday, Tuesday, or Sunday. It is believed that this substance will make the boy active, strong, and very brave; it is therefore not given to girls, lest they grow up to disobey their husbands. The biggest bezoar stones are perhaps 2 cm. in diameter. They are found in the stomachs of nearly all cows, especially those which are very healthy or those which are barren. Interestingly, all vegetarian Badagas give this substance to their infants, even though they know it comes from a dead animal, Like all children's medicines, it is now obtainable in the town bazaars, though formerly it was supplied by the Kota tribe; it even comes in "tablet form."

If the woman is actually ill before the delivery, and in half of the other childbirth cases as a precaution, she is given a medicine before drinking the coffee offered her after the birth. An oil called *be:venne*, which comes from the seed of the nim tree, is boiled with some garlic in it, allowed to cool for a while, and then the mother drinks a little and the remainder is rubbed over her head, neck and body. The oil is very "heat-giving." A piece of garlic is tied with

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844 A piece of garlic is tied with
757 cloth to each of her big toes, to prevent her from catching cold. (If
751 she gets a heavy cold, the illness is called *janni*, and the temperature of the body is below normal. Then a liquid medicine can be administered). Some five to ten minutes after the oil is given, the
846 mother is offered coffee with palm jaggery. This is given to all women after delivery.

844 4.12. The afterbirth comes a half-hour or so after the delivery, either before or after the mother has taken a bath. If it is slow in coming she will have the bath without waiting for it; although in earlier days it was customary to wait for t. Nowadays government midwives, if called in, pull the afterbirth *ex utero* if it does not immediately follow the delivery; and some others do this too.

844 Badaga women seldom go to hospital or even call a doctor
758 during child-birth. If they do so one can be sure that things
743 are very serious and often complicated. One day a Badaga woman was carried to the hospital . . . It was a case of retained placenta of three weeks duration, as the relatives told us. The woman was semi-conscious and pale with the loss of blood . . . (Ketti Medical Mission 1953:4).

657 With the increase in government programs for training midwives, such tragedies are becoming very rare. Some Badagas apparently knew of a medicine which they also provided Todas with to release a delayed placenta (Rivers 1906: 323).

844 Next, the floor where the child was born is washed with a cow-
788 dung solution. A handful of hay is lit with a brand from the fire and circled around several times over the damp spot. The burnt hay is then thrown away and the firebrand hit on the floor at that
751 point. The same place is then scratched with an adze, for it is said that if this is not done the child will get itches on the skin. (No spells are spoken; and it is not important to get the cowdung dried by the fire.)

844 The afterbirth is then carried by a woman to somewhere, generally within the hamlet boundary, where it can be buried. This can be anywhere distant from the settlement. Men may come to help
783 dig the hole, but will not touch the polluting afterbirth. It is bundled up in the dirty cloths or sacks, all of which are buried with it. A big stone and thorn bushes are put on top of the burial place, simply to make sure that no jackals or dogs eat it, for Badagas do

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not savour the idea of that; (although if it happens nothing in particular follows). Should the infant die shortly afterwards, before it has been named, it too is treated as afterbirth material and buried at the usual cemetery. If someone asks the mournful family who has died, the answer must be "No one."

4.13. For the first day or two after birth the mother is given a hot bath four or five times daily. Up till this time she cannot bathe herself, but must have some woman help her. After that time she bathes herself in hot water, twice daily until 25 to 30 days after delivery, and thereafter once daily. Always, the water used is hot. The baby is given a bath three times daily for the first eight days, then twice a day till the nineteenth day, and thereafter once daily, in the evening only.

In the old days, the newly delivered mother was given a special preparation of little millet. This was first baked, and then boiled till it was a mushy porridge (Birch 1838: 104). Now she eats a non-liquid curry. For that peppercorns are fried in a clarified butter, then ground up on the curry grinder. Then some garlic is fried, and salt, tamarind and clarified butter mixed with it while it is kept warm beside the fire. A limited amount of this food is given to the mother twice daily until the fourth or fifth day after delivery, by an old woman who will restrict the quantity even though the mother might want more. Thereafter, for the next 20 to 40 days, according to the state of the mother's health, she continues with this as her morning meal, but in the evenings has paddy rice and lentil soup. She can take a small amount of milk, even from the day of her delivery. This can only be cow's milk, and must be boiled before drinking. It is recognized that a woman who has given birth may appear weak and ugly, and repeated births can lead to ill-health. A proverb puts it this way: "The appearance of a woman who has just given birth to one child is like the appearance of a heifer which has given birth that day."

No woman who has given birth may touch any household utensils till the third, fifth, seventh or ninth day after the first full or new moon, I was told; alternatively it has been reported that she must first see the crescent moon before the period of pollution can end (Thurston 1909: 109). She should be given no work for eight days before or eight days after her delivery: during that fortnight her husband must provide for all her needs, even if he is on the point of divorcing her. It used to be that after five, seven,

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nine or 15 days she might begin to work in the house again (Jagor 1876: 199). Earlier yet, for her first birth, a woman would stay in the pollution hut until the next waning of the moon. In later confinements she would remain in the hut for only three days (Birch 1838: 104). The mother of twins, even if poor, should however stay at home looking after them for at least three months, without doing any outside work.

"A girl who has delivered is a good sight; a field with good crops is a good sight," according to one proverb. Within a month of the birth, on an auspicious day, mother and child return to her husband's house. The party must number (including both of them) at least five persons, and must be of an odd number unless it exceeds 21.

> On arrival there, the infant is placed near the feet of an old man standing by a lamp within the milk-house. Placing his right hand over the head of the infant, the old man blesses it, and a feast is held, before the commencement of which two cups, one containing milk, and the other cooked rice, are produced. All the relations take up a little of the rice and milk, and touch the tongue of the baby with them. (Thurston 1909:109)

If a woman becomes pregnant for the twentieth time by the same husband (a previous marriage does not count), then, whether all the offspring are living or not, the couple go right through the wedding and seventh-month-of-pregnancy ceremonies again. These are performed on a lavish scale, even if the husband has to borrow substantially.

The Form and Sex of the Child

4.14. A proverb asks, "If a mother gives birth to a male child, will the father object to it?" Obviously he will not, since it is a blessing to the family (Verghese 1963: 420). The same idea is also expressed thus: "By delivering a son she is like a prima donna standing on a vantage point and calling out;" or "The man who has begotten a son and the man who has planted a coconut [tree] will not spoil." Another saying puts it quite succinctly: "A strong boy, a weak girl;" and yet another emphasizes that girl babies are not much wanted: "Even though you repeatedly tell her, she is